



Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection
 Division of Agricultural Resource Management
 P.O. Box 8911
 Madison, WI 53708-8911
 (608) 224-4500

Agricultural Enterprise Area Petition

The undersigned persons hereby petition the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP), pursuant to s. 91.86, Wis. Stats., to create an Agricultural Enterprise Area (**AEA**) under s. 91.84, Wis. Stats. We have read the guidance provided and submit the following information in support of the petition:¹

PART I. GENERAL INFORMATION

- | | |
|---|---|
| A. Name of AEA. | Scenic Ridge & Valley |
| B. County or counties in which the proposed AEA is located. | Monroe County |
| C. All towns, villages or cities in which the proposed AEA is located. | Jefferson, Portland, & Wells |
| D. Number of owners of eligible farms within the proposed AEA who signed the petition. | 91 |
| E. Total number of acres in the proposed AEA. | 37,428 |
| F. All parcels in the proposed AEA are located within a farmland preservation area designated in the certified county farmland preservation plan. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| G. All parcels in the proposed AEA are contiguous. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| H. The proposed AEA is primarily in agricultural use. | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No |
| I. Primary type of agricultural production in the proposed AEA. | Dairy, forestry, cash grain |
| J. Designated contacts for the AEA. <i>Please list at least two contacts for the AEA; preferably at least one staff contact (county, town, UWEX, regional planning commission etc.) and one landowner representative.² You may have more than two contacts. Attach a separate page if necessary.</i> | |

Name: Gerald Klinkner, Dairy Farmer
 Address: 28040 Omega Rd., Cashton, WI 54619
 Phone number: 608-462-3006
 Email: klinknerfamilyfarm@hotmail.com

Name: Bob Micheel, Monroe County LCD
 Address: 820 Industrial Drive, Suite 3, Sparta, WI 54656
 Phone number: 608-269-8975
 Email: bmicheel@co.monroe.wi.us

¹Personal information you provide may be used for purposes other than that for which it was collected, s. 15.04(1)(m), Wis. Stats.

² The listed contacts should be willing to:

- Communicate with other petitioners and partners in the AEA, with the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection and with contacts in other AEAs
- Respond to an annual status update inquiry from the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection
- Engage in activities within the AEA

PART II. PURPOSE AND RATIONALE FOR AEA³

Introduction to proposed AEA (optional):

The proposed Scenic Ridge & Valley AEA is in the SW portion of Monroe County and comprises three townships. The area is part of the driftless area of SW Wisconsin typified by coulees and ridges. The proposed AEA is also unique in that the headwaters of 5 watershed basins: Middle Kickapoo River, West Fork of Kickapoo, Coon Creek, Upper La Crosse River and the Little La Crosse River.

Agriculture is the dominant land use in the proposed AEA and most intense (cattle/acre) dairy operations in Monroe County; which has elevated the cost/acre of cropland in Monroe County. The area is rolling to steep with productive soil types. Farmers have a good tract record of practicing conservation. Contour strip cropping and no-till farming is very common in this area for raising crops.

Dairy farms are typically mid-sized operations with one CAFO in the AEA moving towards 3,000 cow dairy operation.

Landowners have a good tract record of participating in programs to protect/enhance their land in the past and currently. The Middle Kickapoo Watershed non-point project was a huge success with landowners participating and the Land Conservation Department implementing various practices from grade stabilization structures, waterways, barnyard systems, and streambank stabilization. The project was initiated in 1989 and ran for 10 plus years. The Discovery Farms is currently working with all the farmers in Jersey Valley Watershed (West Fork of the Kickapoo) on nutrient management practices and monitoring. The farmland Preservation Program (under contract 1,310 acres) was very popular with the farmers in these three townships which is a driving force for petitioning the state for AEA. The Amish Community has also participated in LCD programs over the last 10 years by installing over 4 miles of stream restoration. Concerning forestry, 109 MFL contracts exist in the proposed AEA totalling 5,741 acres of forest management.

This unique area is very productive crop land and good for raising cattle; coupled with landowners that have a history of land stewardship and conservation programs participation makes this a great Agriculture Enterprise Area.

1. State the specific goals for the preservation of agricultural land use.

The main goal of the AEA is to preserve farmland for future generations by retaining & promoting agriculture education, business, and jobs. By being proactive this will slow down urban development and keep farmers more viable and on the land practicing agriculture. Secondly is the continuation of the conservation ethic and strong history of farmers practicing conservation in the proposed AEA to maintain productive soils and protect water quality.

2. State the specific goals for agricultural development and/or innovation.

Many businesses depend on agriculture in this small community and its vital to keep both the farmer and businesses thriving. There is good Infrastructure in place with many livestock farms, grain storage

³ DATCP will evaluate petitions under s. 91.86, Wis. Stats., and will consider information provided in response to the following questions.

facilities and nearby organic facility infrastructure. Recent investments by ag business (Organic Valley, cooperatives, and implement dealers) show confidence that ag business has in agricultural producers. The goal of the AEA is to retain existing ag business while supporting new investments. Another goal is to have landowners sign Farm Land Preservation agreements to protect agriculture. If the above goals are met, then the goal of preserving the strong agriculture history and future in the proposed AEA is complete.

3. Comment on the relationship between the area's goals for agricultural preservation and agricultural development.

The proposed AEA is not located near a large city or industrial area, so we have escaped some of the pressures other municipalities have faced when it comes to non-ag development. For the three townships in the proposed AEA promoting agriculture preservation in order to maintain the agricultural lifestyle and to allow the next generation to do the same, is paramount. It is hoped that an AEA will help people plan for the future and continue the farming tradition.

4. Describe (a) all current land uses within the proposed AEA **and** (b) provide information about land use trends in and around the AEA. (*The proposed AEA must be primarily in agricultural use.*)

The majority of the land in the proposed AEA is owned by farmers who produce all or a significant portion of their income from farming operations. Dairy, beef, poultry, forestry and cash crops dominate the land use activities in the proposed AEA; with a few gravel quarries being operated. In the future, market demand, profit potential, and suitability of land for crops here and elsewhere will determine the type of ag production. The dairy industry in this area is fairly stable with some growth occurring in organic producers and one CAFO operation that is close to Cashton. Because of Organic Valley's influence and their investments in the proposed AEA; cash grain farming is not expected to factor in the loss of hay ground as seen in other areas.

5. How did you determine the boundary (location and size) of the proposed AEA? As part of your answer describe efforts to involve and inform the public in the petition process.

This proposal is being submitted because of the interest by local farmers. Members from the three township gathered with Land Conservation staff, and UWEX agent to discuss interest in forming an AEA. The discussion addressed what it would entail, set a plan in place with a deadline for gathering signatures. The member stakeholders set out to talk with area farmers, landowners and businesses along with attending town board meetings to promote the idea of an AEA. Cooperation between citizens of three townships worked together and are applying for an AEA utilizing the municipal (township) boundaries. Each town board approved this boundary for petitioning the state which makes the most sense for implementation based on similar landscape, land use and intense agriculture presence in this area and for the foreseeable future.

6. Confirm that the proposed AEA is consistent with any existing local comprehensive plan. Use the space provided for any additional information. Submit a future land use map, if available. *Please do not submit a complete copy of any comprehensive plan.*

☒ The county(ies) of Monroe has(have) a comprehensive plan and the proposed AEA is consistent with this plan.

Link to plan(s): www.co.monroe.wi.us/departments/zoning

☒ The Town(s) of Jefferson, Portland, & Wells has(have) a comprehensive plan and the proposed AEA is consistent with this plan.

Link to plan(s): N/A

☐ There are no comprehensive plans for the political subdivisions in which the proposed AEA is located.

Additional comments on comprehensive plan and relationship to proposed AEA:

7. Describe any recent investments made to support agriculture and agricultural-related business in or near the proposed AEA.

The proposed AEA is very active in the agriculture industry and keeping up with current technologies. We have a fair amount of investment going on with dairy expansion, updating farm buildings and intense competition for cropland in the proposed AEA. There is very little turnover in farm ownership since most of are family farms retain the next generation to carry on with the family business. We also see farmers purchasing/updating equipment in the last couple years with the technological advances that are occurring in planting equipment -GIS, harvest equipment and tractors.

There are two implement dealers in the small community of Cashton and one of them significantly upgraded their shop area to an already large facility. Within a 10 mile radius of Cashton there are 4 implement dealers handling the major brands: Case IH, Ford New Holland, Agco, John Deer and Kubota.

The proposed AEA is the most intense organic producing area (approximately 5,000 acres) in Wisconsin. With Organic Valley having a distribution warehouse, a new office complex under construction, and a processing plant in the planning phase shows the area is thriving and providing quality jobs. The Organic Valley growth initiatives coincides with the growth from producers and number of new farms joining the organic movement. (See attached map). The organic industry continues to grow in this area with more conventional farmers converting to a stable pricing mechanism and different life style. This is also visible in the organic poultry industry where conventional dairy barns were converted to growing chickens & eggs for Organic Valley.

8. Indicate the approximate level of petitioner compliance with state soil and water standards.

- ☐ Nearly all petitioners are in compliance
 - ☐ More than half of the petitioners are in compliance
 - ☒ Half or less than half of the petitioners are in compliance
 - ☐ Few or no petitioners are in compliance
 - ☐ Compliance status of petitioners is unknown
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9. Describe the level of non-petitioner cooperator support for the petition.

Support for an AEA is very high from the non-petitioner cooperators. Jefferson township has an Amish community who have a history of participating in the Land Conservation Departments stream restoration efforts, who support preserving farmland and we assume would be participating in the AEA.

We received 8 cooperator petitions from businesses that include: farm & building supplies, two implement dealers, vet clinic, fuel company, home center, and a lending institution. All of the cooperators contacted were in support of agriculture, and happy to fill out the petition.

10. Fill in the tables to provide information about partners and activities in the proposed AEA. Attach additional pages if necessary.

A. AEA Partners		B.
<i>Partner</i>	<i>Involved in petition development? Yes/No</i>	<i>Current or future activity</i>
<i>Ex: UW-Extension, county economic development department, county conservation department</i>	Yes	<i>Ex: AEA outreach, strategic planning, marketing, grant-writing, soil and water conservation activities</i>
Partner: Monroe County LCD		Partner activity: Soil & water conservation practices, NR151 implementation, grant writing, FLP outreach, & 590 planning.
Partner: UWEX		Partner activity: Outreach and education on the FLP program, business upgrades, financial planning and new technologies.
Partner: USDA - NRCS		Partner activity: Planning and design of soil & water conservation practices along with conservation planning.
Partner: Monroe Co. Planning and Zoning		Partner activity: Information and education for exclusive ag zoning.

C. Farmland Preservation Agreement Strategy	
<i>Activity</i>	<i>Summarize future outreach efforts, including who will provide assistance</i>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Informational meeting(s)	Future outreach efforts would start off with a mass mailing by the individual townships sending a flyer out with their tax statement. One on one contact and informational meetings would also be used to inform landowners. Other outreach efforts: UWEX newsletter and the County LCD website.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Mailing	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> One-on-one conversations	
<input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter/media	
<input type="checkbox"/> Other	

D. Land Use Controls		
Type of Control	Existing/Future	Provide details about the selected control
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Farmland preservation zoning ordinance	Future	There is no existing farmland preservation zoning in Monroe County. Informational meetings with DATCP/planning & zoning have been provided for the 7 townships in AEA & or petitioning the state for an AEA.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other zoning ordinances Specify: County Zoning	Existing	The Township of Wells has adopted County Zoning. The other townships have no zoning controls.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Farmland preservation agreements	Existing	Current contracts totalling 1,310 acres in these 3 townships.
<input type="checkbox"/> Purchase of development rights and/or easements (donated or purchased)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Transfer of development rights		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Subdivision ordinances	Existing	Monroe County has a subdivision ordinance that applies to all unincorporated areas or the county, regardless of zoning status
<input type="checkbox"/> Cooperative boundary agreements/inter-municipal agreements		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Natural area protections	Existing	The Mississippi Valley Conservancy holds a conservation easement on one property in Portland Township to protect the natural area from development and preserve the unique landscape and fauna.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) Streambank Easements	Existing/Future	As part of their streambank easement program, the Wis. DNR has taken easements & purchased land on the Little La Crosse River, Farmers Valley and Timber Coulee Creek in all three Townships to protect this class 1 fishery. Monroe County Land Conservation Department has also taken easements within this area.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (specify) CREP	Existing/Future	We have landowners participating in the CREP program providing native grass buffers along some of our best trout waters in the proposed AEA.

E. Agricultural Development Activities		
<i>Type of Activity</i>	<i>Existing/Future</i>	<i>Provide additional details</i>
<i>Ex: Joint marketing or purchasing, development of agri-tourism opportunity, value-added agriculture</i>	<i>Ex: Existing</i>	<i>Ex: Producers have formed a producer cooperative to market their products directly to consumers.</i>
Sparta-Elroy Bike Trail	Existing	Major tourist attraction in this area that promotes the agricultural landscape.
Amish Farms & Businesses	Existing	The Amish craftsmen and farmers draw tourists and business to Monroe County.
Rental Cabins (Percheron Paradise)	Existing	The rentals bring in many tourist to the area to promote agriculture and business in the area.
Down a Country Road (business)	Existing	This local business in Jefferson township promotes agriculture products made in the area (maple syrup, crafts, quilts, etc.)

F. Other AEA Activities		
<i>Type of Activity</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>	<i>Provide additional details</i>
<i>Ex: Form a stakeholder group, attend statewide AEA meetings, develop strategic plan, set up website</i>	<i>Ex: Ongoing, Future</i>	<i>Ex: Working with UWEX, we will form an AEA stakeholder group to consider appropriate next step.</i>
AEA Stakeholders group	Future	Plan to hold annual meeting to share information, target FLP efforts, create interest and provide input for possible farmland preservation zoning.

PART III. MAP AND SPATIAL LOCATION DATA

Please send the following to DATCP in electronic form. Follow the map and spatial location data guidelines found in Part III of the guidance document.

1. A map of the proposed AEA, and
2. The spatial location data for the AEA boundary.

PART IV. IMAGES FROM PROPOSED AEA (OPTIONAL)

If desired, petitioners may submit high resolution images taken from within the boundary of the AEA. Photos should help to depict agriculture and agricultural-related land use described in the petition.

Please follow the image submission guidelines in Part IV of the guidance document.

PART V. SIGNATURE PAGES AND LOCAL RESOLUTIONS

Submit appropriate documentation from all eligible farm owner and political subdivision petitioners. See attached "Landowner Signature Page," "Political Subdivision Signature Page" and "Cooperator Signature Page."

Please follow the signature page and resolution guidelines in Part V of the guidance document. Sample resolution text is included in Appendix B of the guidance document.

Landowner Signature Page

The petition must be signed by the owners of at least 5 eligible farms within the proposed AEA. A separate signature page, in the following form, must be signed by the owner of each farm. An authorized individual may sign on behalf of a legal entity. If a farm is jointly owned by a legally married couple as individuals, both must sign.

Farm owner (correct legal name or legal name of business entity):

Type of business entity, if applicable (check one):

Individual or married couple ☐

LLC ☐

Corporation ☐

Other (describe)

Partnership ☐

Authorized signature _____ Date _____

Print name _____

Authorized signature _____ Date _____

Print name _____

Farm owner address (street, city, zip): _____

E-mail address(es) (if available): _____

I (we) currently claim a farmland preservation tax credit (either under farmland preservation zoning or through a farmland preservation agreement).

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Don't Know

I (we) are interested in maintaining our existing farmland preservation agreement or entering into a new farmland preservation agreement.

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Maybe

(Note: To claim the farmland preservation tax credit under a farmland preservation agreement, the farm must meet state soil and water conservation standards.)

Political Subdivision Signature Page

In addition to passing a resolution in support of this petition, this signature page must be signed by an authorized officer or representative of every political subdivision (county, town, city or village) in which any part of the proposed AEA is included.

Political subdivision name: Monroe County_____

Type (check one): County ☒ Town ☐ City ☐ Village ☐

Printed name of authorized officer or representative: James Kuhn_____

Title of authorized officer or representative: _____

Authorized signature: _____ Date: _____

Principal mailing address: Administrative
Center_____

Phone number: _____

E-mail address: _____

Cooperator Petitioner Signature Page

Persons other than the petitioners may sign in support of the petition. A separate signature page, or letter of support, may be submitted for each cooperator. An authorized individual may sign on behalf of a legal entity.

Legal name of cooperator: _____

Relevant interest (farm owner, business, nonprofit or community organization, government entity, other):

Principal mailing address: _____

E-mail address: _____

Briefly describe your interest in signing this petition requesting designation of an agricultural enterprise area:

Print name _____

Authorized signature: _____ Date _____